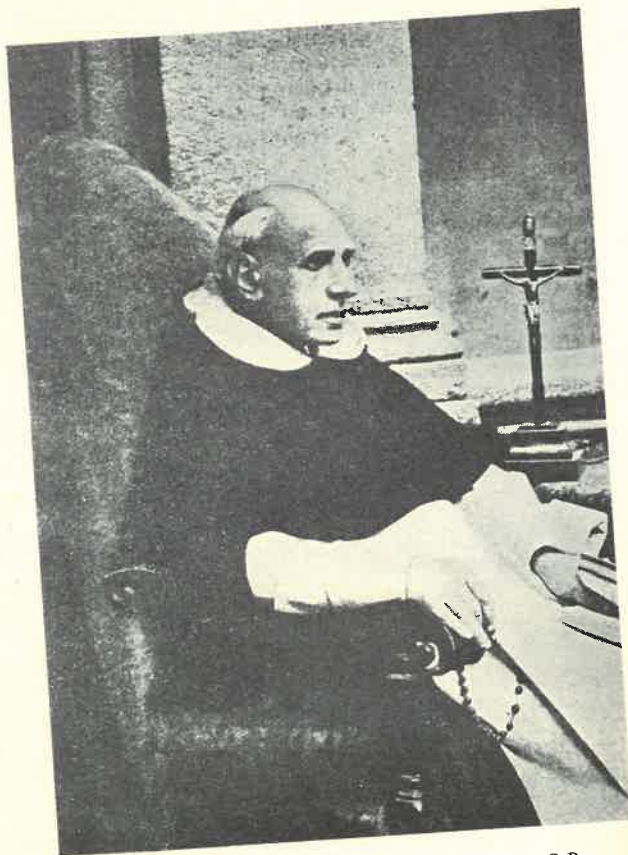


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The Most Reverend Hyacinth Marie Cormier, O.P.

HYACINTH MARIE CORMIER

76th MASTER GENERAL OF THE
ORDER OF PREACHERS

BY

SADOC SZABO, O.P.

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The Most Reverend Martin S. Gillet, Present Master General
of the Order of Preachers

PREFACE

The following brief sketch of Father Cormier's life is a temporary answer to the increasing demand to know more of the Dominican priest who was called a saint by popes, and who, common opinion predicts, "will be on the altar some day." He died twenty-one years ago, and even now the informative process for the cause of beatification is under progress.

He was a distinguished figure in the eternal city, and his departure for the City of God, at eighty-four years, was a general sorrow; but any cause for distinction that Henry Cormier ever felt was at having been born and baptized on the great feast day of the Mother of God, for whom he had an exceptional devotion, and called his "mamma."

We want to know more of saints who had to work for what they achieved, who were not perfect from birth, and in Henry Cormier we find such a strong, courageous one, who achieved tremendous results in spite of a lifetime of tuberculosis and austerity. His dearest undertakings were almost thwarted several times by exacerbations of the chronic disease, but God lifted him above the physical disabilities, and left him more spirit than man, accomplishing the unexpected to the end of his days.

Unfortunately the present sketch does not reveal his inner life, for his glory was from within, and he kept the secrets of this spiritual universe from all

outer show. No doubt, later, some of them will be revealed.

One of his boyhood friends, Constant Popot, O.P., recalls Henry at fifteen years of age: "thoughtless, untidy, with long black hair the scissors rarely touched; lazy, yet an excellent student because of his natural talent, not much inclined to disorder because of the little vivacity and caprice in his nature." He had a great love of literature—the contemporary French poets, such as Lamartine—and of art, and apparently, he possessed the artistic temperament. In confidence he told his friend: "I'm getting quite fed up with this commonplace existence; I want to leave for Italy. That is the country of art, music, and painting." The plan was promptly nipped in the bud, and Henry entered the preparatory seminary, where a wonderful thing happened. He contemplated spiritual beauty, and he never forgot its aspect, never again lived in the commonplace. It was far more impressive than the beauty of art, literature and music, and it triumphed over "idleness, laziness, disorder, lack of good bearing, whether at prayer in the chapel or study in school, and from rare communions, to work, regularity, correctness and good bearing, a respectful attitude before God in church, more frequent communions. All this appeared in Henry with that stamp of decorum wherein the artist was still to be perceived. I mean an absence of all vulgarity, little familiarity in relationships, no noise in conversations, no loud laughter, a reserve, a gravity, and a decency that nothing brusque or rude could disconcert."

So on this new road he now went forward, and it stretched beyond space and time. He developed fully in spite of obvious handicaps, and unclimbable mountains vanished before his faith and endurance like smoke before the wind. First of all, he used every moment of his time—in the day whether traveling, or in the community; and at night, lying awake, as he frequently did—jotting down thoughts which were later of value when asked to write or speak impromptu. He was a model of work and a model religious, giving to each office in the community or Order the seal of his excellence, leading the way by exact observance and a meekness which captivated souls. Contradictions, failures, ingratitude did not in the least disturb his humility. He was accustomed to say, "We deserved it; the name of Our Lord be praised." He also had the exceptional opportunity of working with great men in the Church, and he brought to the highest position in the Order a deep knowledge of individuals and a broad knowledge of conditions in the Order in various nations, and was able to carry on smoothly where his predecessors left off.

On December 17, 1916, occurred the solemn ceremonies commemorating the seventh centenary of the Approval of the Order of Preachers. Father Cormier chose this time, during the Pontifical Mass, to leave his Dominican family and join the "stream of the river which maketh the city of God joyful," to celebrate a still greater solemnity with Dominic in heaven.

S M D

CHAPTER I

The Price of a Vocation

"This is the Lord's doing: and it is wonderful in our eyes. . . ." Ps. CXVII, 23.

Henry Cormier was born in France at Orléans, on December 8, 1832, of a family of well-to-do merchants.

He considered it a special favor of Divine Providence to have been born and baptized on a day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, for whom later, and throughout his entire life, he had a warm filial affection and a tender devotion.

He received his early education at home. Upon the knees of his good mother he began to lisp the first words of his own sweet French tongue. From her Christian heart, he received his first impressions of virtue and piety, which always remained with him. He was then entrusted to the care of the Christian Brothers until the time he entered the Junior Diocesan Seminary at Orléans.

At the end of his secondary studies, he

was received into the Grand Seminary conducted by the Sulpician Fathers. After conscientious preparation in his course of theology he was ordained priest on May 17, 1856, by the illustrious Bishop of Orléans, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop Dupanloup. A dispensation for age was given him because of his exceptional piety.

The candid piety of young Father Cormier and his amiable conduct were a great edification to his schoolmates. His beautiful traits of character and heart made everyone feel that one day he would be an excellent worker for Our Lord in the Diocese of Orléans.

But the voice of the Savior was heard more clearly by him. . . . "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast . . . and come, follow me. . . ." Matt. XIX, 21. Without delay or hesitation, according to the teaching of spiritual masters (St. Thom. Aq. 2. 2. q. 189. a10), he chose the narrow way of the imitation of Jesus Christ to the total immolation of self, and resolved without delay to embrace the religious state.

At that time, the new Dominican Province of France, founded by Father Lacordaire (d. Nov. 20, 1861), was at its high-

est development. While Catholic life in France was writing in the Church history of modern times the most beautiful pages of a serious and fertile rebirth, Dominican life, having recovered the vigor of its youth, was renewing in contemporaneous society the glorious deeds of the past. Many men noted for their learning, virtue, and eloquence, enrolled under the banner of St. Dominic and by their Apostolic zeal acquired new recruits. Many priests felt called to the religious life in the Dominican Order, thanks to the bold genius of Father Lacordaire, who commanded the respect of some, the veneration of others, the sympathy of all.

Young Father Cormier was also among those inspired by this new movement which was pressing religious souls to give their all to God, and to souls for God.

This evangelical and austere life, this apostolic activity of men entirely devoted to souls, appealed to this young Orléans priest so much that he decided to become a Dominican. His bishop had come to love and esteem Father Cormier—he was then only a student—and so, not without regret, Father Cormier was granted permission to

join the Order of Preachers. He sought and obtained admission to the novitiate at Flavigny (Côte-d'Or).

He received the Habit on June 29 of the same year, about a month and a half after his ordination, receiving the name of Father Hyacinth, made illustrious by the ancient canon of Cracovia—one of the most saintly sons of St. Dominic, and one of the most indefatigable apostles of the German and Slavonic countries. St. Hyacinth from that day became his patron and his model.

However, the young priest must first acquire, at the price of severe trials, the grace of a religious vocation. During his novitiate it seemed that his health would not permit the austerities of the Order. At the end of his year of probation, he expectorated blood so much, and this was accompanied by such weakness, that the Fathers decided to send him home.

At that time, Father Alexander Vincent Jandel, Master General, was making his canonical visit to the convent at Flavigny. He was able to observe personally the good qualities of Father Cormier, so he kindly extended the time of his probation according to ecclesiastical and Dominican laws.

He was hoping that Father Hyacinth's health might improve in the meantime.

Father Jandel took him to Rome and sent him to Santa Sabina on the Aventine where an international novitiate had just been established.

We can imagine Father Cormier's joy at the General's decision. He felt new life at the hope of recovering his health in the more moderate climate of Rome and of thus being able to consecrate himself to Our Lord by his holy Vows.

To this prospect there was added the exceptional favor of living in a convent where St. Dominic himself and a large number of Saints and Blesseds of the Order had lived and had sanctified it by their presence.

Strangely enough—and a sweet thought, too—at Santa Sabina, St. Hyacinth, his new protector, and his brother, Blessed Ceslaus, both received the Habit at the same time from St. Dominic.

But alas! his stay in Rome did not better his hoped-for health. Recourse again had to be had to the Holy See for another extension of time for his novitiate.

Pius IX had had occasion to meet our sick

novice. He was so favorably impressed that he granted the request of the General, and Father Hyacinth was admitted to Profession.

After three years of sorrowful expectation and trial, came the much-longed-for day; on May 23, 1859, the future successor of St. Dominic—still so poor in health that no one would dare venture a guess about the future—Father Hyacinth, made his Profession in the historical Chapter Room of Santa Sabina. Who can describe the intense joy of our novice, when after such long and difficult trials, he finally attained the desire of his heart.

Father Cormier always considered himself a faithful disciple of Father Jandel. Until the end of his life, he had a profound and filial veneration for his Father and benefactor. Later, Father Cormier wrote the life of Father Jandel, thus leaving a magnificent monument of his love and gratitude.

"The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength: the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me. . . . I shall not die, but live: and shall declare the works of the Lord. The Lord chastising hath chastised

me: but he hath not delivered me over to death. . . . I will give glory to thee because thou hast heard me: and art become my salvation. . . ." Ps. CXVII, 16, 17, 18, 21.

CHAPTER II

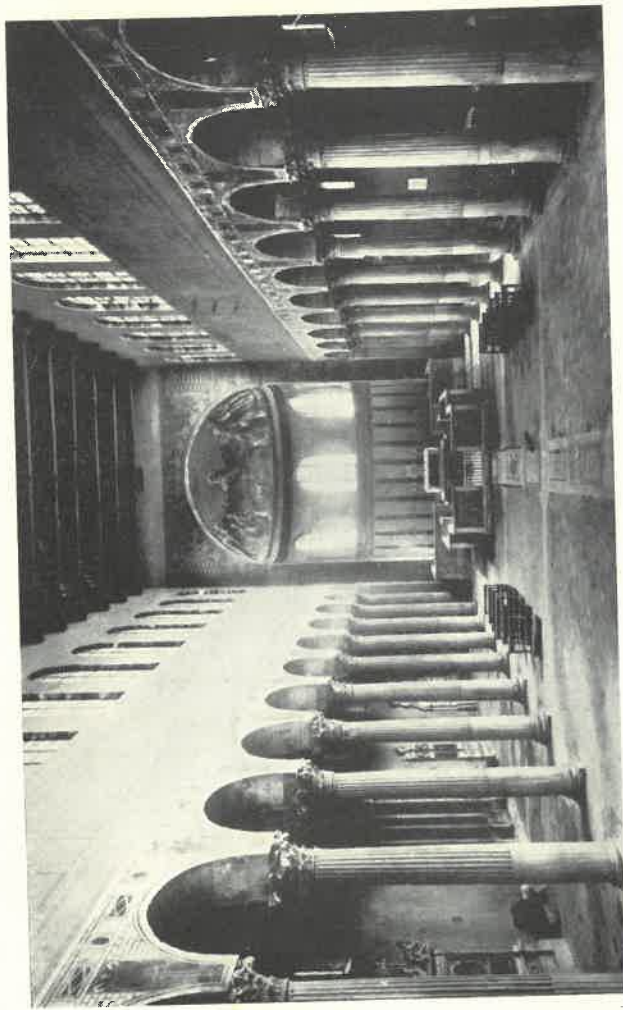
The Growth of a Master

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus: And the things which thou hast heard of me . . . the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also. . . ."
2 Tim. II, 1, 2.

"Carefully study to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. . . ." 2 Tim. II, 15.

Father Alexander Vincent Jandel, 73rd Master General of the Order, was, in the middle of the last century, the man chosen by Divine Providence to carry on the work of restoration, happily begun by Father Ange Dominic Ancarani, and to triumph definitely in this dread crisis to which revolutionary upheaval had violently reduced the Dominican Order.

In most of the States, this Order, once so flourishing and vigorous, had been dead—legally abolished in the name of new liberty. Interiorly and exteriorly weakened



Santa Sabina, Rome, Where Father Cornier Made His Profession as a Member of the Order of Preachers

THE GROWTH OF A MASTER 9

under the pressure of multiple causes, not all equally grave, yet all sinister, the Order became negligible as regards its sublime mission and the reason for its existence. Here and there were oases where Dominican life, like pure water, spouted abundantly and sprinkled generous souls who had resisted the attack and who 'mid fire and steel had been restored by Divine Providence to the shelter of the reconstructed building. Such was the Convent of Chieri, the first to be reconstructed; such the Convent of Bosco, which received from Father Lacordaire the highest tribute any religious community can be paid: "This is the first time that I feel really in religion."

Then again, generous efforts certainly were not lacking as soon as Father Ancarani was able to accomplish what he was attempting, for there were to be found many faithful disciples of Our Lord.

But it was necessary to make a beginning by extending the work of restoration, by creating new centers of activity, by opening new ways of communication in order to bring together the scattered members and to make the Order again a living and healthy organization.

Father Alexander Vincent Jandel was the beginner of this work. Animated with a holy zeal for the honor of the House of God and powerfully aided by the Holy See, he joyfully set about his task; against great odds he visited the various countries, established new Provinces, and, where there was need, he introduced into the convents more regular discipline by the faithful practice of our holy Constitutions.

Dominican spirit gradually extended its domain. Vivified by this spirit, the organism daily acquired greater strength. From day to day it increased and became better fitted to produce this salutary effect of its existence—Apostolic activity for the salvation of souls.

In the midst of these trying difficulties, Father Cormier was private secretary to the General. Thus he was able, long beforehand, to become acquainted with his projects and intentions—certain proof of the General's implicit confidence in Father Hyacinth. They were companions on long and fatiguing journeys, making canonical visits to convents in the various provinces. Father Hyacinth was thus given opportunity to personally become acquainted with

the condition of the Order in the various nations, and it is hard to estimate how much this experience meant to him later when he became General.

He was witness to these new foundations, which the wisdom of Father Jandel had multiplied in the garden of St. Dominic. He knew precisely the past and the necessities of each Province. He saw many of them rebuilt from their ruins. Only one who had seen their development before his very eyes, would later appreciate their activity.

This position of confidence, occupied in his youth by Father Cormier, was certainly a sure proof of the designs of Providence and a remote preparation for the position of Master General later to be confided to him.

After two years as Master of Novices in Santa Sabina Convent to the great satisfaction of Superiors and best profit to the young men, Father Cormier was elected Prior of the Convent of Corbora, in Corsica.

It was at a time when the Province of France, founded by Father Lacordaire, had developed to the point where it could divide

or, rather, re-establish the old French Provinces which had been suppressed at the time of the great revolution. In 1866 the united Convents of Southern France constituted the Province of Toulouse. Father Jandel named Father Cormier first Provincial of this Province, young indeed in years, but very rich in experience. He held this position for eight years, until 1874. He was then Prior at Marseilles for four years. In 1878, we find him again at the head of the Province of Toulouse.

At the expiration of his third term as Provincial, he was chosen Prior of the Convent at Toulouse. In 1888, he was entrusted with the foundation of a new Convent, and the construction of a Church at Biarritz; and in 1890 the Convent of St. Maximin, principal house in the Province, elected him Prior.

As Superior, Father Cormier was a real blessing, thanks to the prudence with which he guided his brethren. The magnificent ideal of the Conventual Prior, which later as Master General he described in one of his writings, was in reality no more than a portrait of himself. He directed all his efforts in favor of the strict-

est observance of our holy Constitutions and pious customs, and the perfect accomplishment of the vows of religion, not only by his own personal example, but by all the means given him by the Dominican rule. His simple and mortified life removed all excuse or easy pretext, in showing that his demands did not exceed just limits. He used gentleness, not indeed as regards faults, but toward imperfect men; not to encourage them by his tolerance to persevere in their mistakes, but to encourage them to amend.

It can be readily understood then, that from that time on his Religious had the greatest confidence in him. By reason of his exalted religious spirit and irreproachable life, he possessed an extraordinary influence over his brethren, who in return, full of veneration for him, willingly placed themselves at his disposal.

If his Province ranks, even today, among the first in the Order, whether from the point of view of religious spirit—exact observance of the Dominican Constitutions, of serious application to the Sacred Sciences and especially to the doctrine of St. Thomas, or from the viewpoint of Apos-

tolie activity in the strictest sense, this must be attributed to the tireless labor of Father Cormier for the good of his Province. In the accomplishment of this task, he never allowed himself to deviate nor to be misguided by human considerations.

The reputation of Father Cormier had long since gone beyond the narrow limits of his Province and his country. After the death of Father Master General Jandel (December 11, 1874) when the uncertainty of the political situation would not permit a General Chapter, Father Sanvito, Provincial of the Roman Province, governed the Order in the capacity of Vicar. But that the Order might have a leader, the Holy See chose three candidates and proposed them to the Provinces to be voted upon. The votes were to be sent directly to the Holy See itself. Father Cormier was one of the candidates. The Sovereign Pontiff named Father Joseph Larroca, a Spaniard, as Master General, who directed the ship of St. Dominic for twelve years with a clear vision of purpose and a firm hand. He died January 8, 1891.

At the elective chapter at Lyons, September 19, 1891, Father Cormier was pres-

ent as Definitor of his Province. Father Andrew Frühwirth, then Provincial of the Province of Austria-Hungary, was elected successor of Father Larroca and became 75th Master General of the Order of Preachers.

The new General was well aware of the eminent gifts that Father Cormier possessed. So Father Hyacinth was named "Socius," companion and counselor, with the title of Provincial of the Holy Land. Besides, he was given the degree of Master in Sacred Theology. Thus a vast field of endeavor was opened to the modest ex-Provincial of Toulouse.

Rome was not new to him. We have seen that in his younger days he had lived for many years in the Eternal City and there learned how to speak Italian fluently. Whether on pilgrimage, or in discharging the duties of his office, he had had many occasions to return to Rome and to remain for some time in the center of Christianity. He was returning now with the very decided intention of placing all his talents at the service of the Order, at the side of the Master General. He worked tirelessly and spared no sacrifice to satisfy his Superiors.

Father Frühwirth becomingly appreciated the great and beautiful qualities of his companion and appointed him Procurator General of the Order on May 27, 1896, an office extremely important because the Procurator is the official intermediary between the Dominican family and the Holy See.

Whether as Companion or as Procurator General, Father Cormier was a most disinterested adviser and a most sincere assistant to the General, who could not only depend upon his wise and prudent counsel, but could trust him implicitly in all things. He had nothing in mind except the good of the Order, and he loved the successor of St. Dominic as a Father, remaining faithful to him in all the vicissitudes of his difficult office. In what esteem Father Cormier was held, indefatigable and obscure worker that he was, may be conjectured from the fact of his nomination of July 24, 1896, as Consultor of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Congregation for the purity of faith and morals, namely, the Holy Office. In this position he must have given proof of his exceptional ability, for he gained the confidence of Leo XIII to such an extent that the Pope had recourse to him regarding

some most delicate missions, and in 1899 wanted to create him Cardinal. It is generally admitted that his elevation to the purple was prevented at the last moment by the French government. France did not look favorably upon a Cardinal chosen from a religious Order to seek her best interests as a member of the Roman Curia. Archbishop Mathieu of Toulouse was then given the purple instead of Father Cormier.

No one was happier at this turn of events than the humble Procurator General of the Dominicans. He could, in perfect peace and with all his power, continue his modest labors beside the Master General. But Almighty God desired to place him on a higher pedestal.

"But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day. . . ." Proverbs IV, 18.

CHAPTER III

"Fidelis Servus et Prudens"

"Wisdom conducted the just man through the right ways and showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him the knowledge of the holy things, made him honorable in his labors and accomplished his works." Wis. X, 10.

In 1904 Master General Andrew Frühwirth ended his term of twelve years' office—a period of clear-visioned and constant activity. The celebration of his eightieth birthday in 1925 brought to the attention of the Dominican family the signal service he rendered the Order. He died February 10, 1933—an eminent figure in the College of Cardinals.

Consideration of Father Frühwirth's work and the precious heritage that he left upon the expiration of his term of office allow us to conjecture just what might be the mind of the Capitulars assembled at Pentecost—1904—for the election of a Master General, in Santa Maria "de la Quercia" convent, near St. Viterbo. This con-

vent of assembly of the electors not only called to mind the Lacordairian period of restoration, but was itself an eloquent testimony to the hardy initiative of the Ex-Master General, who had just recently bought back the convent from the Italian government and had completely restored it.

This monumental church, celebrated sanctuary of her who mercifully desired to be Queen and Protectress of the Order, still retained its beautiful chants and Dominican liturgy. Every evening the children of Mary used to march in the "Salve" procession before their Mother in Heaven, as she benignly blessed them from her rustic image. The old cloisters resounded with our ancient melodies as the brethren marched in liturgical processions; and then at recreation, rang out the clear voices of Dominican youth who had come from neighboring France seeking temporary asylum in Italy during the period of suppression. The long corridors, silent and recollected, once more saw the sons of the great Lacordaire wholly absorbed in one generous thought—to acquire renewed strength at the very source, in order to "come back"

more vigorously when Divine Providence should so will it.

The cells of the monastery were daily silent but expressive witnesses before God of the incessant work of the Religious of the Province of Toulouse, who by study and prayer, by the observance and exercise of all the virtues, brought back to life in the austere convent the glorious days of its intensest vitality and its most ardent fervor.

All this had its powerful influence on the electors. Few, if any, perhaps, thought, at the beginning of the Chapter deliberations, of the candidacy of the seventy-two-year-old Procurator General who was present at the Chapter as Definitor of his Province.

Humanly speaking, one could hardly dream of entrusting the government of the Order to an old man almost worn out. But God, Who directs hearts, guided the votes of the electors, and Father Hyacinth Marie Cormier was chosen as successor of St. Dominic, much to the surprise and contrary to the expectation of the voters themselves.

Unexpected as was the news of the election, yet there was general satisfaction with it, especially at Rome, where thousands

were in direct contact with the Dominican Order, and as a result followed with interest the trend of our family affairs.

"No more worthy religious could have been chosen," some said.

Others said, "St. Dominic evidently still loves his Order, since he has given it a successor of such high-standing virtue."

The first to express satisfaction with the new General was Pope Pius X, who sent Father Cormier an image of St. Dominic, on the reverse side of which was inscribed in very gracious form the Apostolic Benediction.

So outstanding was the spiritual energy of the new Master General, so rich the life experience he had acquired, so highly esteemed was he throughout the whole Order that at the election no one seemed to pay any attention to the very delicate and precarious condition of his health. It has already been noted that from his youth he had suffered great weakness from pulmonary disease. At that time it even had a dangerous character. His condition, however, was now neither better nor worse. His brethren testified that he was always hovering between life and death.

And yet he it was who, as an old man of seventy-two, had the responsibility of the painful work and duties of Superior of this great Order scattered throughout the entire world. It was not surprising, then, if from the time of his promotion there was talk of a convocation of the Chapter election upon short notice. But God in His designs had decided otherwise. "Counsel and equity is mine; prudence is mine; strength is mine"—not only spiritual but corporal too. "By me princes rule, and the mighty decree justice." Proverbs VIII, 14-16.

Superiors, especially ecclesiastical superiors, are the servants of God and instruments of His Providence. If Our Lord wishes a man to carry out any of His eternal decrees, He will give him the health and strength necessary to this end. This is clearly shown in the case of Father Cormier. His elevation to the highest position in the Order came about under most extraordinary circumstances which plainly show the will of God. Our Savior saw to it that he would be able to retain his position and carry on his grave obligations until the end. This was realized to the very letter.

We understand from then on that the Order and all those who had relations with him, official or friendly, looked forward with interested attention to what might be the policy of the new General. Everyone appreciated that he envisioned his high position in the light of faith. And to that ideal he directed all his vitality—all dreams to be realized in the light of God Himself.

After the General Chapter of Viterbo Father Cormier sent his first circular letter to the whole Order, under date of June 29. To develop a more extensive program had been to him something superfluous: his personality and his previous work, known by all, constituted a clear and forceful program.

"We are united," he wrote, "in the love of Jesus Christ and His holy Mother, of St. Dominic and St. Peter, visible representative of Christ."

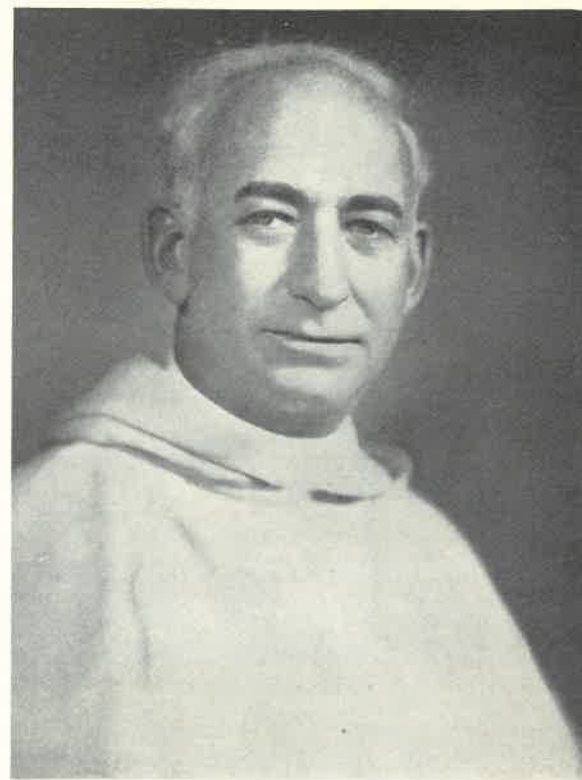
His motto was "Caritas Veritatis"—"the Charity of Truth"—according to the spirit of the Order in its most authentic representatives and the teachings of its secular history.

Shortly after, he began his visitations of the Provinces. In the summer and fall of

1904 he visited the principal convents of Italy, Belgium, Holland and Germany. He also went to Leopold and Cracovia, where he satisfied his ardent desire to venerate the tomb of his heavenly patron, St. Hyacinth. In the provinces of Austria-Hungary the honor of receiving the zealous successor of St. Dominic fell to the convents of Prague, Olmutz, Znaim, Vienna, Gratz, Sabaria, as well as the recently founded house at Budapest, where he could check up on its activity. Wherever he went he was shown the most affectionate respect. He left with each his paternal and salutary advice, which lingered in his wake as a sweet perfume. He particularly reminded everyone, with forceful and efficacious words, of fidelity to the grace of vocation and the duties imposed upon them as religious by their profession.

He had an ardent desire to visit America the following year. And he had already started when he was overcome by a heart attack which compelled him to abandon this project.

Much as it disappointed him, and much as the Order regretted it, his health no longer permitted him, except on rare occa-



Very Reverend Terence S. McDermott, O.P., S.T.Lr., Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, Who Made Profession Under the Saintly Father Cormier

sions, to continue personally making fatiguing journeys for visitations. Father Cormier made frequent attempts to do so, but the Holy Father finally forbade such trips which really were endangering his life. So instead, he entrusted his canonical visits of the Provinces to the best-adapted religious, among whom was his future successor, Father Theissling (d. May 2, 1925), who enjoyed his special confidence and who was entrusted by him with many delicate missions.

Meanwhile, Father Cormier did not remain inactive. Even from Rome he directed the Order with rare wisdom. It is not our intention here to discuss his solicitude for the entire Order and for each of its parts; but we must point out, at least in a general way, that his administration was most happy and blessed.

Many Provinces are indebted to his paternal care of the good of the Order for their re-establishment, such as the Province of Bohemia, instituted just after his election (1905).

Likewise, to his decisive action are attributed the construction and assured existence of the convent and church in Buda-

pest. The convent of Pilseu was founded during his generalate. In other countries his activity was even more fruitful. He paid particular attention to the Fathers who were teaching in the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, where the situation was not without its difficulties. He made frequent and long visits to them, and with a view to giving the young clergy under their direction a thoroughly spiritual education, he had constructed the "Alber-tinum," a large theological college. The influence of the Order increased accordingly.

Father Cormier took to heart the spiritual and temporal well-being of the daughters of St. Dominic. He had a warm affection for them always, no matter to what congregation they belonged or to whatever work of charity they were devoted. However, it was only natural that the monasteries immediately subject to his jurisdiction should be the beneficiaries of his solicitude. For them he was a true Father by his devotedness, his counsels, by his spiritual help, and as far as was in his means, his material assistance.

Father Cormier observed exactly the

Constitutions regarding the holding of General Chapters, and in the four Chapters that were held during his generalate (Quercia, 1904 and 1907; Rome, 1910; Veuloo, 1913) he did not fail to preside at each session, during an entire week, a difficult thing at his age.

Since he was unable to visit all the Provinces in person, he made a résumé in a few volumes of what was the purpose of his canonical visits. Thus he wrote various brochures on the duties of Prior, Professor, Master of Novices, Master in Sacred Theology, etc. These instructions were used to promote a good spirit in all our houses and to eliminate imperfections which might have crept in.

During the same period our General showed, in the Roman Curia, especially in the congregations of which he was a member, a universally appreciated activity, profitable for the Order, for the Church, and for the various congregations and religious societies.

Nevertheless, Father Cormier's greatest merit is, and remains, the foundation of an international university of philosophy, canon law and theology. There already

was in Rome a philosophical-theological college, the "College of Minerva," so called because of its location in the Convent of the Minerva. But this college, noted for its excellent professors, had not in recent years a strictly international character, nor was it able to meet the exigencies of the times, since within a very short time after the sacrilegious taking of Rome in 1870 the convent was suppressed, and the courses had to be given in rented houses. The necessity of the Order's having a great house of studies and religious education at the center of Catholicity became more and more urgent from day to day, since the other Orders—the Benedictines, Franciscans, Capuchins—had just established at Rome their own centers of studies.

Finally, the General Chapter of Quercia (Viterbo), where Father Cormier was elected, not only had decided the foundation of an institution of this kind, but had charged the new General to take the necessary steps in that direction. Three years later the General was prepared to announce to the Chapter assembled the happy news of his having acquired a suitable property, located in the center of the city. Con-

struction would soon be begun. From then on, completion of this urgent project was assured: a central Studium.

Another decisive motive urged Father Cormier to work energetically for the foundation of a great college. In 1884 the Italian government had driven the General from his residence at the Minerva. Father Larroca was compelled to go and occupy, with his retinue, a private house in the little street of Sebastianello, next to the Spanish market place.

All the children of the Dominican family saw with deepest sorrow the successor of St. Dominic, and the Fathers who helped him in the government of the Order, live in a sort of exile. They were forbidden to assemble for solemn choral prayer and for the other exercises of the cloister. In that regard they found themselves unable to derive benefit from the graces and precious prerogatives of regular life.

No one felt as keenly as Father Cormier, the disadvantages of this terrible state of affairs. One-time head of a Province of high religious standing, he fully realized the importance and the blessings of common observance. What joy must have filled his

heart, so tender for the honor of God and the edification of his brethren, when in a circular dated December 8, 1909, announcing the opening of the new buildings, he was able to announce this happy event. He desired the new house to be a shining example of cloister observance to his brethren and to the whole Order.

Construction of the edifice advanced more rapidly than had even been hoped for. The cornerstone was laid June 29, 1908.

The plans were drawn and elaborated by the General himself—not an easy matter—for favorably situated as was the property, it was very restricted, and it was impossible to escape the somewhat aggravating official requirements of the Roman inspector; and yet the building to be constructed had to accommodate not only the General and his staff but about twenty professors for the college and a considerable number of students of the Order. Not mentioning the regular places, indispensable to religious life, it was necessary to provide for classroom accommodations sufficiently large, and other rooms intended for studies. The university was not restricted to Dominican students alone, but was open also to audi-

tors of the secular clergy and the various congregations and colleges so numerous in Rome.

All these complicated matters had to be considered, a difficult problem which the General solved with wonderful acumen, both as regards the practical arrangement of rooms, as well as the architectural completion of the building. This immense structure was almost completed in 1909 to such an extent that there was consideration of inaugurating academic classes. On the 4th of November Pius X received in audience the General, with professors called from the various Provinces to the new institution, and students belonging to the Order and various dioceses and religious congregations. In his reply to the General's address of homage, the Holy Father assured him that he would take the new institution under his protection and would give it his heartiest support. From then on it was called the International Pontifical Angelical College.

On November 5 the courses of study were begun. The chief aim had been attained. On the 18th of May, 1910, the inner chapel was blessed in the name of the

Holy Father by Cardinal Vicar Respighi. On this occasion Father Cormier delivered one of his most brilliant addresses. Finally on May 22, Holy Trinity Sunday, the buildings were completely finished and full regular life began. What sentiments of gratitude towards God, to the Sacred Heart in Whose honor the main altar in the chapel is dedicated, filled the heart of our old Master General when this long-desired work, the supreme task of his life, was accomplished before his very eyes; when finally for the first time in the new college the "Te Deum" was sung in choir by a hundred sons of St. Dominic.

On the occasion of the blessing of the college the Holy Father sent his best wishes in a most friendly letter. When the Fathers assembled for the General Chapter in August of the same year, joy was universal. Once more was seen what vital energy the institution of St. Dominic contains. Everyone understood, and with admiration, the accomplishment of Father Cormier's magnanimous soul. With a strong will, decisive, filled with confidence in God, he accomplished what to an ordinary man would

be impossible. Under such conditions this man's will was a veritable power.

The foundation of this great International University is without doubt one of the outstanding achievements of contemporary history of the Order. For this reason alone Father Cormier's generalate should be ranked as one of the most glorious of the Order. Nothing shows more clearly the importance of this institution than this fact that the number of outside students (not Dominican) was doubled in five years. We may add without exaggeration that the high standing of this Pontifical University is recognized at Rome and outside of Rome.

The years following the foundation of the Angelical College, Father Cormier devoted his undivided attention to its perfection, and was vitally interested in the religious life of the community of which he was both father and mother. How happy he was with the scientific progress of the institution! Frequently he brought the entire college, professors and students, to the Holy Father.

At his last audience, cordially granted by the Protector of the College, June 28, 1914, Pius X spoke some memorable words re-

garding the usefulness and necessity of the doctrine of St. Thomas, both for theology and for the Church. Benedict XV also received the Angelic College in Solemn Audience on December 20, 1914. He also gave assurance that he, too, wanted to be its paternal protector, and keep it in his favor.

If Father Cormier seemed preoccupied with the foundation of the new college, yet he was not unmindful of the general good of the Order and of each of its Provinces. Even to the last day of his responsible position he tried to be "all to all." The General Chapter at Veuloo had decreed a canonical visit of the entire Order. Fathers would be assigned for this by the General. Father Cormier immediately appointed visitors for the various Provinces; and in order that these appointments, so important for the extension and progress of the Order, might be done in a unique and efficient way, the General published a complete instruction on a canonical visit—a lasting proof and clear expression of his paternal charity embracing the entire family of St. Dominic. Reading these letters we feel that we are listening to the great reformers of religious

life: a Blessed Humbert of Romans or a Blessed Raymond of Capua would never have used more vigorous language on the nature and necessity of religious discipline.

Nothing could define in a clearer, more inspiring, or captivating manner than this splendid circular, overflowing with holy zeal, the high concept of religious vocation according to the mind of the Church, the indispensable need of the faithful observance of the Constitutions to fulfill the obligations taken before God, the real value, too, of their prescriptions, however trifling they may appear, to live up to the vows faithfully, the necessity of constant renewal of interior spirit and of consecrating oneself with a start ever new to the work of the apostolate.

Many other thoughts of serious import occupied the mind of Father Cormier. Only to mention one: he would have been supremely happy to restore the Convent of Santa Sabina, of which the Italian government had seized the greater part, to erect there according to the original plan of his predecessor, Father Jandel, a convent for an international novitiate under the immediate jurisdiction of the General.

What would have been his joy had he been able, too, to open an annex to the Angelic College for outside auditors of the university! But in the face of insurmountable obstacles, this plan and others failed to materialize, at least momentarily, to the very deep regret of Father General Cormier.

"For the rest, therefore, brethren, we pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus that as you have received from us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more. For you know what precepts I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification."

1 Thessalonians IV, 1, 2, 3.

CHAPTER IV

The Good Shepherd

"Be ye followers of me, brethren, and observe them who walk so as you have our model." Philipians III, 17.

Having outlined the wonderful activity of our General, let us consider briefly his personality, presenting some of his characteristic traits. The life of the servants of God is within. They themselves scrupulously attempt to keep the secret of their heart, not only away from the great public, but from their own immediate circle. Entrance there is only granted the angels and very rarely a privileged soul. Others may only get a glimpse into this inner sanctuary.

Father Cormier himself was preoccupied in concealing this inner mystery of his soul from all outer show, yet his superb qualities, his great virtue, his sincere piety did not remain hidden. They were known by their works, as a tree is known by its fruit.

Our Father General was in reality a man of ideal character. In outward appearance there was nothing striking or extraordinary. His emaciated face, and in later years his somewhat stooped figure, his gray and partly bald head with a large forehead, his sunken eyes, lowered and almost closed, but engaging by the gentleness of their look, his speech, soft, prudent, deliberate, his meditative and thoughtful being, his easy, modest and ever courteous manner, his amiability, gave at once the impression that here was a man different from other virtuous people. His body was weak, his thin face almost transparent. Observing him carefully one wondered whether he might be a spiritual body or an incarnate spirit. In short, he was a holy soul, completely absorbed in God.

Above all, Father Cormier was a man of prayer. His was a beautiful example of how we should apply the words of the Gospel—Luke XVIII, 1—1 Thess. V, 17—“Pray without ceasing.” He fully realized intimate union with God, both for the soul and as regards its relations with one’s neighbor. He had the soul of a contemplative. His delicate conscience in the observance of

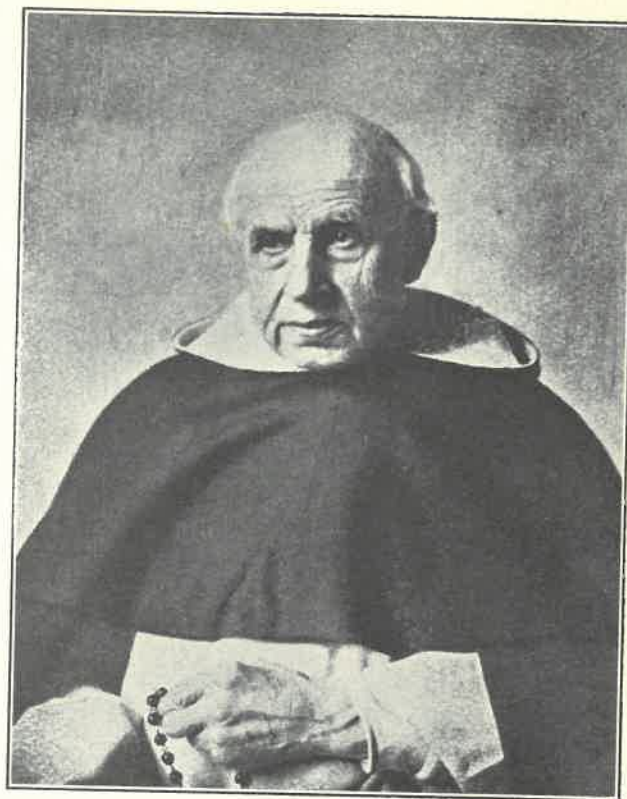
liturgical prescriptions was admirable. When he ascended the altar to celebrate Mass or for any other ecclesiastical function, like Simeon in Sacred Scripture, Eccl. VI, 12—“he honored the vesture of holiness.” During community chant, which he never missed in spite of his manifold occupations, he appeared to belong no longer to earth and to men. He really chanted with the angels, in the presence of God and the saints. “I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, for thou hast heard the words of my mouth.” Psalm 137, 1.

Moreover, wherever he was he enjoyed equally interior and exterior peace, and he prayed. One of his travel companions remarked that frequently on the train he remained for hours with eyes closed, not saying a word. Occasionally his lips moved slightly, and upon his pale countenance could be seen the subject of his thoughts: he was praying, he was meditating.

He had a very special devotion to the Blessed Virgin whom he confidently and affectionately called his “mamma.” No one will ever know the great number of rosaries recited by the supreme and loyal guardian of the Confraternity and of devotion to the

Rosary. Every time he was seen walking on the promenade or along the corridors he had his Rosary in his hands. During this prayer, gushing from the very depths of his heart, he found the strength and patience necessary to accomplish with equanimity the great sacrifices and responsibilities which his position demanded. Very often, before councils and important decisions, he was seen going to the chapel before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, to seek light. He loved to "thumb" his Rosary beneath the chapel windows. On the eve of important events, many times during the year, he went for days at a time to Marino, where the Dominican Sisters were under his immediate jurisdiction, in order to be assured, in solitude and prayer, of the assistance of Our Savior.

However, such a life was not possible, except at the price of continued vigilance over the exterior and interior senses, at the price of constant interior and exterior mortification. True are the words of St. Paul exemplified in Father Cormier—"Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." 2 Corin-



Par Dominique aller à Marie
 Par Marie à Jésus
 Par Jésus à son Père
 Ô bel itinéraire!
 O voyage fortuné!
 O bienheureuse arrivée!

J. Hyacinthe M^{re} Cormier
 m. g. — s. d.

thians IV, 10. Without fear of error, we may say that he was perfect master of himself. In this respect he had acquired an heroic perfection. He so governed his tongue that never could anyone say that he had uttered a useless or thoughtless word. Yet at times he indulged in harmless jesting; but never was he seen or heard laughing loudly or engaged in noisy chatter. Thus is explained that wonderful peace and equanimity in his conduct that commanded so much respect. One felt drawn towards him almost irresistibly, and unhesitatingly gave him one's confidence.

An elderly lady seeing him for the first time gave expression to these words, "What a kindly priest, this Father General. I should like very much to go to confession to him."

This spiritual man, who appeared dead to the outside world and whose bodily strength seemed quite insufficient, was, on the contrary, an ideal model for work. As a true son of St. Dominic, Father Cormier was filled with zeal for the house of God, for the Church and for the salvation of souls. His apostolic zeal is deserving to be brought to light some day. Above all, he

was a remarkable preacher. In his younger years he had acquired a reputation as a wonderful orator and in many places he gave Lenten and other conferences to mixed audiences.

He was invited to St. Anne's Church in Vienna, where there was a large group of distinguished listeners and, as usual, won the faithful sympathy of the various classes of society. We can vouch from personal experience that his addresses, whether before the Holy Father in solemn audience, or on other occasions, such as investitures, professions, visitations, were ideal. He prepared for them conscientiously. Some of his addresses in Latin, French and Italian have been printed and published. They were so marked by simplicity and unity that he used to leave his listeners spellbound. In short, they were masterpieces of sacred eloquence. In his speech, as in his person, Father Cormier was not given to show and rhetorical bombast which perhaps, while charming the ear and appealing to vanity, are not so becoming in a minister of Gospel truth. On the contrary, he had in his words a winning force that filled his listeners with love and enthusiasm for the

truth portrayed. He used to like to choose for texts for his preaching short passages from Sacred Scripture, which he knew, after the manner of Bourdaloue, how to adapt to the subject matter in a way full of charm and unction.

As is natural to be expected in a long and active priestly life, Father Cormier had gathered around him a large group of pious souls striving for virtue and perfection, of whom he was spiritual director, consoler and father. His relations in this respect extended far beyond what would be expected of a man so retired from the world. We must bear in mind that persons of the highest class from all countries sought his direction; but with an extraordinary discretion Father Cormier never made mention of this matter. To cite one example only, Princess Clotilde of Savoy, daughter of King Victor Emmanuel the Second, and wife of Jerome Napoleon, was until her death June 25, 1911, age sixty-eight, in her castle of Moncalieri, the spiritual daughter of Father Cormier. She always called him her father and kept up with him a fervent correspondence.

Father Cormier was attached to the Holy

See with every fiber of his profoundly Christian heart. He enjoyed the greatest esteem of Leo XIII. His influence increased from year to year in ecclesiastical circles. Father Cormier could be counted among the most trustworthy and most loyal associates of Pius X. Very many congregations of religious women chose to confide in him matters of a most difficult and delicate nature. He acquired inestimable credit by his activity at the Roman Court—by his relations with the various administrative departments and with persons of great dignity. All littleness of heart and viewpoint were strangers to him; he proposed only the interests of God and the Church. When it was in his power, he came to the assistance of all without distinction. "May all hearts praise the Lord" was his customary saying, and he did everything possible to attain this end—that good might be done by all.

As General of the Order, Father Cormier was tireless in the daily exercise of his occupations. He expedited matters with the greatest punctuality and never procrastinated, however difficult or displeasing the work. His official correspondence was noted for its rare brevity, clearness, preci-

sion and tact. Never a word too much. In the government of the Order, with perfect simplicity he had recourse to the Fathers near him who, according to the Constitutions, were his advisers. He gave them his entire confidence, and he expected the same from them.

So that, thanks to such unity and reciprocal confidence, it was possible to govern the Order a long time in common accord, with great peace and wisdom.

In spite of his various duties and his activity concerning the whole Order, Father Cormier found time and opportunity, just as before his election, to busy himself in a very effective manner with literary composition. The mere enumeration of his works would take several pages. They belong both to hagiographic and ascetic literature, and are distinguished by doctrine borrowed from the great masters of the spiritual life; they abound in clearness and simplicity of style, and in a religious fervor at once wise and foreseeing. In his writings we recognize a man of interior life, experienced in supernatural affairs. His spiritual doctrine of noble simplicity vividly recalls the writing of St. Francis de Sales and of the Vener-

able Louis of Grenada. While he resorts clearly to these works, yet Father Cormier shows a rare knowledge of ascetic and historic literature, both Dominican and foreign. The last work from his pen appeared in the Latin language, during the summer of 1916, in memory of the seven hundredth year of the Order's approbation. In this jubilee writing he spoke masterfully and with a great deal of interest of the purpose and vocation of the Order in modern times. To this objective, he presented the two outstanding figures of the family of Preachers, St. Dominic and St. Thomas, placing in relief their importance in the Church.

Such is the way this man of recollection worked and studied with tenacious perseverance until the end of his days. It can be truly said that work sustained him and constituted his life.

He was an authentic model of the true Dominican, whose vocation consists in teaching and preaching, in work without truce for the salvation of souls. In him was fully verified the old maxim "Ora et Labora"—"Pray and Work."

Among the virtues of our venerated Father General, we have to especially ad-

mire his rare prudence. But with him it was not mere human perspicacity nor still less "wisdom of the flesh which is an enemy of God"—St. Paul, Romans VIII, 7. It was a supernatural virtue, undoubtedly nourished by great experience, but directed by the light of faith, inspired by love of God and neighbor and enriched by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, Father Cormier knew how to expedite affairs submitted to him, with a marvelous precision and security. Weighing all circumstances, calculating carefully probabilities and exigencies, discerning with precision and judgment the essential and lasting from the accidental and transitory, were to him almost spontaneous. Of all these things he had a clear and almost instinctive vision, a sure sign of the supernatural assistance of grace.

He scrupulously kept the secrets entrusted to him and so increased the confidence of all who approached him. Moreover, he had the gift, as no other, of settling confidential matters submitted to his judgment, whether by private persons or ecclesiastical authorities.

We have mentioned before that the Angelical College was to be an international

institution, where, under his paternal guidance as successor of St. Dominic, members of the various Provinces sent to Rome were to be perfectly at home. No one could have looked after with greater energy than Father Cormier, the spirit of unity and charity of the college. It would be representative of the entire Order.

A Frenchman both by birth and education, he had acquired, thanks to his profound interior life and his delicate conscience regarding duty, a sense of justice so lofty that neither in private nor public life did he make any distinction in nationality as regards treatment of his religious or in the administration of the affairs of the Order. He was father to all, and by the same token they were his children. Even the World War itself did not change him in this respect. It had convinced him all the more of the necessity, of the beauty, of the excellence of true charity and of supernatural justice in a religious community.

In a word, Father Cormier—and those who had any business with him will agree—was animated toward all by a winning and gracious cordiality that could more rightfully be called a “paternal kindness.” Here

again, his words were measured and brief. Perfectly gracious, he received anyone at any hour of the day, but he answered questions and settled matters with conciseness equaled only by his amiability.

Another merit of our Father General was his sincere humility and veritable fear of God. Except in case of necessity, he went so far as to refrain in his discourses of ever speaking of himself or of his own merits. He spoke neither well nor ill of himself, and if mention had to be made of his works, he did it impersonally: this or that has been done—such and such has been accomplished.

A fascinating modesty emanated from his entire being. In his words and actions he possessed a meekness that captivated souls. Father Cormier was not ignorant of the high and universal esteem in which he was held; but, on the other hand, he was always mindful of the words of Sacred Scripture (Ecclesiasticus III, 20-21)—“The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things; and thou shalt find grace before God. For great is the power of God alone: and he is honored by the humble.”

Worldly praise never affected him but only served to cause him to redouble his zeal for the glory of God. Contradictions, sufferings, failures, ingratitude, misunderstanding of his noble intentions did not in the least disturb Father Cormier's humility. In such instances he was accustomed to say, "We deserved it; the name of Our Lord be praised"; and after deliberation he fully appreciated the truth of the matter in question held by the opposition. Personal aversion never found a spot in his generous heart. Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to think that humble Father Cormier in the slightest degree ever detracted from the honor of his high position. Wherever and whenever it was necessary he assumed the role of Master General, perfectly aware of his full charge of responsibility. He knew how to command respect, and everyone felt it, both in and out of the Order. Those men, strangely modest, displeased him, who, at any price and not without ostentation, avoided the honor due to their rank. Father Cormier looked upon these exterior homages as a practical means of making the dignity itself respected and of keeping in mind

the duties of the one in whom this dignity is invested.

Certainly he did not look for these marks of respect and esteem, yet he accepted them when they were given as a matter of duty, without, however, insisting on them in any way. After all, honor was given the successor of St. Dominic, and since everyone was convinced of his disinterestedness, his manner of acting occasioned his receiving an equally sincere personal homage.

The truly noble character appreciates the convictions of others and has always a keen appreciation for the opinion of others. In this respect Father Cormier was ideal. His promptness in acceding to the judgment of others was the effect of his profound humility and a fruit of his prudence. He gladly accepted all advice, listened with patience to the "Pros" and "Cons" and made a sharp distinction between persons and things—a sure sign of his self-abnegation and strength of character.

It must not be understood, however, that this humble condescension in him meant weakness. He knew upon occasion how to exercise a strong will. It can easily be understood that, particularly in his declining

ceived during his life. In a voice profoundly moved he recalled the memory of his venerated and good predecessor, Father Jandel, and then he spoke of the severe account that a superior, a General of the Order must render for the good he had left undone and for the imperfections that he had not corrected. "My only hope," said he, "is my dear 'mamma,' Queen of the most holy Rosary; she will be my sweet advocate before the judgment seat of God."

Thus passed the twelve years fixed by the Constitutions for the period of the Generalate. What had been thought improbable was an accomplished fact. At the election of Father Cormier in 1904, no one ever dreamed that this old man, so advanced in years, would have survived his term of office, much less that he would have accomplished such excellent work. Often, it is true, his immediate attendants feared for his precious days. Many times a year serious illness caused them to fear that his end was near. But Divine Providence visibly was watching over his physical strength. Pope Pius X knew what an austere ascetical life Father Cormier was leading, without consideration of self. With paternal kind-

ness he looked to his health and gave accordingly some very careful prescriptions, which Father Cormier strictly observed. He was faithful to them in the spirit of filial obedience. Thanks to these precautions our venerated Father General, whose ill health permitted his religious profession only by special dispensation of the Sovereign Pontiff, attained without loss of his mental faculties the patriarchal age of eighty-four.

The veneration and esteem of the Brethren of the Order for Father Cormier increased each year during his generalate; and it is a precious heritage for the Dominicans that the personality of their General has been universally appreciated for its true worth.

Repeatedly, the Provinces had the happy privilege of expressing their filial devotion to the venerable and prudent successor of St. Dominic, at the various chapters. These General Chapters were likewise favorable occasions for spontaneous and enthusiastic outbursts in favor of Father Cormier and his government. May 17, 1906, was the date of his Golden Jubilee of Sacerdotal Ordination. Solemn High Mass was sung at

the Minerva, principal Dominican Church in Rome. Provincial Superiors attended it in large numbers, together with many others of the Brethren, to offer the Jubilarian their best wishes and filial homage.

At the Venerable Chapter of Santa Sabina (where on May 23, 1859, Father Hyacinth, then a young priest, took his vows) there was great solemnity on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary of profession. At the renewal of his vows the faithful representative of St. Dominic, with genuine humility, made this public confession: "I am sincerely sorry for all my abuses of divine grace, for the loss of time, for the numerous sins of omission in good works that I might have done, for my neglect in tending to Christian perfection, as my duty calls for. But, confident in the mercy of God, in the indulgence and prayers of the Brethren, I renew my profession, and I promise to be obedient in heart and in deed, until death."

Finally, on May 17, 1916, he had the rare privilege of celebrating with his Brethren and friends the sixtieth anniversary of his sacerdotal ordination. His person, so worthy of veneration, and his brilliant



Saintly Master General in Death

merits, admired by all, were at Rome the object of the most complete and general respect and homage. "Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor." 1 Tim. V, 17. In the present case, the Order put this exhortation into practice, with sentiments most sincere, and with a most grateful affection.

"You are witnesses and God also, how holily and justly and without blame we have been to you that have believed. As you know in what manner, entreating and comforting you (as a father doth his children). We testified to every one of you that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." 1 Thess. II, 10-12.

CHAPTER V

"In Manus Tuas"

"The just shall live for evermore, and their reward is with the Lord and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore they shall receive a kingdom of glory and a crown of beauty, at the hand of the Lord." Wisdom V, 16-17.

According to the Constitutions of the Order, Father Cormier finished his term of office on Pentecost, 1916. The chapter for election should have been held at Salamanca in Spain at the same time as the celebration of the seven hundredth anniversary of the official approbation of the Order by Pope Honorius III, December 22, 1216.

The fury of the World War, however, upset this plan. Indeed, the war was so protracted that the idea of convoking a General Chapter at all was almost abandoned. Until further developments Father Cormier was to keep on directing the Order. In his absence it would have been necessary to appoint an intermediary Vicar General.

Such thoughts afflicted the keen sensibility of Father General. The outbreak of the World War had already moved him deeply. Serious questions arose regarding the Order and especially concerning the Collegio Angelico. Then, the soul of the venerable Father, "in the expectation of what shall come upon the whole world" (Luke XXI, 26), was overcome by an unspeakable fear and agony. More vividly than ever did he feel his lack of personal strength to carry on the duties that these strenuous times were placing on his shoulders, not to mention future possibilities. For years he had waited for the moment when he might be relieved of the enormous responsibility of ruling the Order.

According to the ordinary course of events, it seemed impossible to assemble representatives of the Order for the election of a new General. Such was the common opinion. Father Cormier alone thought otherwise. He decided—and here we note the extraordinary vitality of this old man of eighty-four years—on convoking at all costs the General Chapter at the Theological Seminary "Albertinum" at Fribourg, Switzerland. He had previously been as-

sured of the consent of the Canton of Fribourg. On August 3, 1916, thanks to the presence of practically all Provinces, the election was held in all charity and harmony. Father Louis Theissling, but lately Provincial of Holland, was elected Master General of the Dominicans. He was a man of the energetic type, with a rare experience in business matters. He already was aware of the situation of the numerous Provinces, having seen it before his very eyes. The tired hands of Father Cormier turned over to him the helm of the Order. At the end of the General Chapter in which our beloved Father had taken an active part, he made his way to Rome. Since the Constitutions permit it, he chose for residence the Convent St. Clement of the Irish Province, but temporarily under the jurisdiction of the Master General. There had already been prepared for him a cell, quiet, alone and spacious, where in peaceful seclusion he could prepare for death.

After the twelve years of hard work as General, Father Cormier finished his course and came to the end determined by Divine Providence. There was nothing more to do than to introduce his successor into the

manner of carrying on and to the thousands of Romans with whom the Master General by reason of his position had intimate contacts. This he did with his characteristic tact, disinterestedly and with self-renunciation. Now he could pray with the psalmist, "Declare unto me the fewness of my days." Psalm 101, 24. "He groaned within himself, waiting for his adoption as son of God, the redemption of his body." Rom. VIII, 23. He desired now more than ever "to be dissolved and to be with Christ." Philipp. I, 23.

The immediate preparation for death was not of long duration. To our great delight he lived to celebrate with us the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It was also his eighty-fourth birthday, December 8, 1916. On that feast he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and he had that distinction again for four days—December 10, 11, 12 and 13. The Holy Father had granted him the faculty of celebrating Mass, seated.

The Very Reverend Father Theissling anointed him on December 3rd. After this ceremony, Father Cormier asked pardon of his successor, in the name of the Order, for

his faults as Master General, as Superior, and as a Religious. On the days when he was unable to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass he received the bread of Angels, nourishing his soul with Him Who, very soon, would be his possession for all eternity. The Vicar of Christ paid him the delicate attention of sending him, as a loyal son, the Apostolic Benediction.

On December 16th our beloved friends and Father requested that the antiphon "Salve Regina" be chanted at his bedside. Such is the custom of our Order during the last earthly moments of our Religious. "I want," said he, "this hymn to be chanted while I am conscious, so that I may join with the community in the recitation of this beautiful prayer." The various Dominican Communities of Rome assembled at St. Clement. About two P.M. in the death chamber, and in the neighboring vestibule the "Salve Regina" was intoned and chanted in medium voice.

Father Cormier followed this antiphon of the Blessed Virgin in visible recollection. When it was finished he said forcefully, "I renew the three vows of my profession and I thank Almighty God for giving me the

grace of perseverance in my vocation until death." Then, like Jacob dying, he gave in a broken voice his last paternal blessing to his Brethren around him and their new General.

He spent the rest of the day in prayer and expressed the wish to receive absolution. "Today is Saturday," said he, "and my day for confession." At midnight between Saturday and Sunday, December 16th and 17th, he received Holy Communion, and many times expressed his desire to be delivered of the bonds of his body to live with Christ, if such were the pleasure of God. He listened with evident signs of acquiescence to the ejaculatory prayers and pious thoughts that the attending priest suggested to him. At intervals he uttered lengthy groans in his suffering. Finally on December 17th, at half-past twelve noon, he opened his arms, then joined his hands, as does a priest at the altar. Peaceably he gave up his soul to his Creator, to enjoy his eternal reward. At the same time Cardinal Boggiani was celebrating a Pontifical Mass. It was the Mass in honor of the seven hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Order of Preachers.

Two historic dates thus were recorded at the same moment! This death of a saintly religious Ex-General of the Order, placing the seal on the jubilee celebration, appears to us a distinctly providential event. We are pleased to see in it a holocaust, that God accepts, joined to the holocaust of His Son, and offered by the holy angels as a tribute of commendation for the blessings He has continually bestowed upon us during the seven centuries of our existence, as a pledge of immortality and perpetual benediction for the entire Order.

The mortal remains of our venerated departed brother were laid in state in the sacristy of the Church of St. Clement. Visitors came in throngs to pay their last respects and to place upon his sacred hands objects of piety.

Solemn obsequies were held at the Minerva on Wednesday, December 20. Mass was sung by the Very Reverend Father Seraphin Cimino, Minister General of the Franciscans, in the presence of numerous Cardinals, Bishops, Prelates, Superior Generals of Orders, and Religious Congregations. On January 18, 1917, the thirtieth-

day Mass was celebrated in the Church of St. Anthony.

"For we know, if our earthly house of this habitation is dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, external in heaven." 2 Corinthians V, 1.

CHAPTER VI

His Memory

"The memory of him shall not depart away; and his name shall be in request from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom; and the church shall show forth his praise." Ecclesiasticus XXXIX, 13-14.

The death of Father Cormier made a most profound impression. It was not unexpected, but when it occurred it was sad for all. One expression at his last moments was this: "So die the saints."

The Holy Father expressed his condolences through the Cardinal Secretary of State, in a cordial and paternal letter to Father Theissling—something the Pope rarely did and then only for dignitaries of the Church. In the present case, it was the matter of a Superior of an Order universally esteemed in all Rome and far beyond its walls. The Holy Father had been close to him, not only as Protector of the Order and as a Tertiary, but he venerated and

loved Father Cormier personally for his exquisite qualities of heart and soul.

Profoundly moved, the new General hastened to notify the Order of the saintly death of his revered predecessor. This he did by way of a circular letter, in which he extolled the eminent service rendered the Dominican family by Father Cormier.

Truly, we lost a great deal by the death of our Father General. The enormity of that loss is better understood when considered in the light of the merits acquired by the Order, both within and without the center of Catholicity, upon the departure from this life of our beloved brother.

The generalate of Father Cormier was neither troublesome nor agitated. Its historic value in the Church will always remain more or less enveloped in silence. The task assigned to the saintly General by Divine Providence was of a specially interior nature, yet one of sovereign importance. In the exercise of his charge Father Cormier insisted above all upon the "one thing necessary," presupposed in all exterior lasting progress, since upon it depends the blessing of God, the Source of all good. This one thing necessary is more indispensa-

ble for us in these superficial and feverish times if we wish to safeguard ourselves and our state from sinister dangers in the future. It consists in the total consecration of the heart to God by a sincere effort towards the perfection of the Christian virtues. The means for us to attain that objective are the observance of the Constitutions, left to us by our Fathers. Devotion to these, based upon this solid foundation, without self-preoccupation, is necessary, plus zealous work for our holy Church and immortal souls, by study, preaching and spiritual guidance. Such was the fundamental idea which guided our Father General. In his eyes, this ideal was embodied in St. Dominic, whose name he always pronounced with an accent peculiarly his own, expressive of affection, yet with a touch of sadness. His most ardent desire was to see realized in us more perfectly each day the image of St. Dominic. The dominant note of his government, as manifested in his circulars, his sermons and all his undertakings was the aspiration to the spiritual life and, by that, to the real apostolate. Above all, he wanted the Order more interior.

We are not unmindful that human ac-

tions, infinitely varied, are subject to divers judgments. That is not less true of the government of superiors. So it is as regards our venerated General, whether we consider his person or his acts. We should, indeed, merit reproach if we even pretend, through excessive zeal, that everything during his generalate was marked with the sign of highest perfection. Nevertheless, those who knew Father Cormier will grant that, full of the spirit of St. Dominic, he understood the principal need of the Order entrusted to him. Loyally, before God and man, he applied himself without reserve to promote good by the means which he considered best fitted and which he had at his disposal. Beyond all doubt, God blessed lavishly the prayers, efforts and labors of his faithful servant. Under his guidance the interior formation of the Order, the orientation of souls toward the high moral and spiritual ideal of the religious life, made progress. Harmony, so necessary to the attainment of a common purpose, and the spirit of cordial unity were powerfully favored. We are indebted to him in a special way for the foundation of the Collegio Angelico, which contributed in no small

measure to strengthen his aspiration for a scientific foundation according to the mind of the Church and St. Thomas. Among the works of Father Cormier which pertain to the interior life of the Order this project is of the utmost importance. Only with difficulty was this later on realized. Under his government the reputation of the Order, and especially of its Master General, increased notably, especially in Rome, center of the Church. The character and mission of the Order in our own times as in past centuries were further recognized, its work better appreciated, its influence in ecclesiastical life strengthened. Its progress, indeed, was assured for the future.

No one was more eager to live in personal contact with the Provinces and their Religious than Father General. We are convinced that the Order had found, in his profound interior life and prudent experience, an abundant spiritual nourishment. However, he acquired this heritage, the priceless treasure of a spiritual family, by his spirit of prayer and severely mortified life; by his equanimity; by his patience with opposition and contradictions; by his unshaken confidence in God during the

time of trial; by his activity without let or hinder, universally recognized and admired; he had acquired this priceless heritage of sincere confidence and veneration of the Order towards its supreme moderator, the successor of St. Dominic.

Before the tomb of our Father Cormier our heart is moved, it is true, but we do not forget that he has left us the most precious heritage that he could give us and of which we stand most in need—interior family peace—affection and filial veneration of all toward their common Father.

The Very Reverend Hyacinth Marie Cormier, seventy-sixth Master General of the Order of Friars Preachers, has passed to a better life, but he has not been taken from us. He remains with us united in charity and by his works, which inspire us with a profoundly sincere love for the Order. He still speaks to us by his charming example and unforgettable virtue, as priest, as religious and as superior. He instructs, exhorts, blames and consoles us by his writings, which reflect the vigorous and seven-century-old spirit of the Order.

To him—our Father, our model, our master—to him, faithful successor of the

Patriarch St. Dominic—we owe our filial love and our eternal gratitude.

"For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline: think on these things.

"The things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, these do ye: and the God of peace shall be with you." Philippians IV, 8-9.

FINIS